

10. (Amended) A process for the production of an epoxidized natural rubber latex which comprises deproteinizing natural rubber latex and then epoxidizing the natural rubber latex.

11. (Amended) The process according to claim 9, wherein the deproteinized natural rubber latex has a nitrogen content of less than 0.10 % by weight.

51

12. (Amended) The process according to claim 10, wherein the deproteinized natural rubber latex has a nitrogen content of less than 0.10 % by weight.

13. (Amended) The process according to claim 9, wherein the deproteinized natural rubber latex is graft copolymerized with an organic compound having an unsaturated bond selected from the group consisting of methacrylic acid, acrylic acid, methyl methacrylate, methyl acrylate, 2-hydroxyethylmethacrylate, acrylonitrile, vinyl acetate, styrene, acrylamide and vinylpyrrolidone.

J2 15. (Amended) The process according to claim 9, wherein the deproteinized natural rubber latex has a nitrogen content of less than 0.05 % by weight.

16. (Amended) The process according to claim 9, wherein the deproteinized natural rubber latex has a nitrogen content of less than 0.02 % by weight.

17. (Amended) The process according to claim 10, wherein the epoxidation step has an epoxidation rate which is sufficient to produce an epoxidized deproteinized natural rubber latex having an epoxidation ratio of 26.0% or more in 5 hours.

18. (Amended) The process according to claim 10, wherein the deproteinized natural rubber latex has a nitrogen content of less than 0.05 % by weight.

19. (Amended) The process according to claim 10, wherein the deproteinized natural rubber latex has a nitrogen content of less than 0.02 % by weight.

Please add the following claims:

--20. (NEW) A method of producing a modified natural rubber latex comprising,

step (i) - combining protease with a natural rubber latex,

step (ii) - washing the product of step (i) with a non-ionic surfactant to give a deproteinized natural rubber latex having a nitrogen content of less than 0.10% by weight, wherein said deproteinized natural rubber latex does not exhibit an absorption band at 3280 cm^{-1} in the infrared spectrum, and

step (iii) - graft copolymerizing the deproteinized natural rubber latex by combining the deproteinized natural rubber latex with methyl methacrylate, a peroxide initiator and tetraethylenepentamine to form the modified natural rubber latex.--

--21. (NEW) A method of producing a modified natural rubber latex comprising,

step (i) - combining protease with a natural rubber latex,

step (ii) - washing the product of step (i) with a non-ionic surfactant to give a deproteinized natural rubber latex having a nitrogen content of less than 0.10% by weight, wherein said deproteinized natural rubber latex does not exhibit an absorption band at 3280 cm^{-1} in the infrared spectrum, and

step (iii) - epoxidizing the deproteinized natural rubber latex by combining the deproteinized natural rubber latex with a nonionic surfactant, and a peracid to form the modified natural rubber latex.--

53 --22. (NEW) The process according to claim 20, wherein the graft copolymerization step has a graft efficiency of 62.7% or more.--

--23. (NEW) The process according to claim 20, wherein the deproteinized natural rubber latex has a nitrogen content of less than 0.05 % by weight.--

--24. (NEW) The process according to claim 20, wherein the deproteinized natural rubber latex has a nitrogen content of less than 0.02 % by weight.--

--25. (NEW) The process according to claim 21, wherein the epoxidation step has an epoxidation rate which is sufficient to produce an epoxidized deproteinized natural rubber latex having an epoxidation ratio of 26.0% or more in 5 hours.--

--26. (NEW) The process according to claim 21, wherein the deproteinized natural rubber latex has a nitrogen content of less than 0.05 % by weight.--

53

--27. (NEW) The process according to claim 21, wherein the deproteinized natural rubber latex has a nitrogen content of less than 0.02 % by weight.--
